

1880

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HISTORY  
OF  
FENIANISM AND FENIAN RAIDS  
IN  
VERMONT.

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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE VERMONT HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY AT MONTPELIER, OCT. 19, 1880, BY THE  
HON. EDWARD A. SOWLES OF ST. ALBANS.

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THE FENIAN RAID.

Recollections of Hon. B. F. Fifield,  
Who Was United States District At-  
torney at the Time.

Publication in the Morning Journal a short time ago of the story of the St. Albans raid, as recalled by former Governor Josiah Grout, brings up the fact that the Hon. B. F. Fifield of this city was United States District Attorney at the time of a raid in another direction, when the Fenians undertook an attack on Canada in June 1866, and it was through his activity that the raid was so quickly suppressed.

When Mr. Fifield learned that a body of Irishmen had gathered in Franklin county and were intending to march into Canada, he telegraphed Rockwood Hoar of Massachusetts, who was then Attorney General of the United States. He was informed in reply that a company of regular troops was on the way to St. Albans.

Before the troops arrived Mr. Fifield gave a warrant for the arrest of Col. O'Neill, the leader, to United States Marshal Foster, who had commanded a brigade at Gettysburg and who weighed something like 300 pounds. The marshal went to the place where the men were encamped, if their irregular gathering can be called a camp, apprehended Col. O'Neill and took him away without any resistance on the part of his followers. "It made a deep impression on my mind," says Mr. Fifield, "the respect for law and order shown by these men who were planning a lawless raid."

In about three hours after the arrest of Col. O'Neill the troops arrived. They dismounted from the cars in silence, formed in line and marched to the park without a word being spoken except the necessary orders. In the park they pitched their tents, built fires, made coffee and cooked supper like old campaigners as they were.

Warrants of the John Doe order were then issued for the other leaders and they were gathered in without resistance and without any occasion for employing the military. This broke up the raid, as the men were disheartened at the loss of their leaders. Mr. Fifield then went to Governor Smith, who asked "What am I going to do? I don't want these men left here hanging around St. Albans with no money."

"Put them on the cars, ship them to White River Junction and dump them there," said Mr. Fifield.

This was done, and on their arrival there the New Hampshire authorities took charge of them and shipped them on to Massachusetts.

There was little need of Federal interference, as the men were unorganized, practically unarmed, poorly clothed, and possessed of nothing dangerous except a strong hatred for England. In reporting the matter to the Attorney General Mr. Fifield compared them to Artemas Ward's troops. But this prompt interference to prevent a breach of the neutrality laws was in such contrast to the actions of England in several cases that it made a strong impression and placed the United States in a fine position before the world.

The leaders were indicted and their trial took place in the United States court at Windsor before Judge Woodruff of New York. A verdict of guilty was soon secured and Col. O'Neill was asked the usual question, if he had anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced. In response he said:

"I fled from Ireland to escape the cruelty and brutality of England. I have made my home here and have become a citizen of this country. I enlisted in her service as a volunteer in

the war and worked my way along until I was promoted to colonel. I intend to be a peaceful citizen. But I believed it my duty to avenge my wrongs and those of my native country and thought I saw an opportunity to do so in making a raid on Canada. I did not intend to violate the laws of this country but to avenge the wrongs of my own."

Senator Evarts and his family and a number of summer visitors and many people of Windsor were present and all were deeply affected at the simple remarks of Col. O'Neill. The District Attorney made no reply. Judge Woodruff proceeded to sentence the prisoners, and in doing so said:

"For your conduct in the service of the country, which secured your promotion to the rank of colonel, you deserve the country's thanks. For your endeavor to become a good and peaceful citizen you deserve commendation. But these things cannot secure immunity from punishment for offenses you have committed against the laws. The sentence must be executed, and the sentence of the court is that you be confined in jail for a period of 60 days."

This enabled the Government to state to the representatives of Great Britain that the neutrality laws had been enforced and offenders against them promptly convicted and imprisoned. As a matter of fact Col. O'Neill was not closely confined in jail, though he returned to his quarters there every night. But it is probable that some fear of the effect of this proceeding on the Irish vote was felt, for pardon was granted before the end of the term and he was released.

No. 7—THE PLOT TO SEIZE CANADA.

**A**N army 240,000 strong, with headquarters in New York, was secretly recruited to invade Canada. This daring plan was not made during Colonial days, but as lately as 1866—barely forty-five years ago.

The plot was part of the general Fenian movement which had for its chief object the freeing of Ireland and turning that country into a republic. The civil war in America had just ended. In the Union armies had been thousands of Irishmen and Irish sympathizers. These men were brave, trusted veterans; the very sort for a perilous mission. And the Fenians decided to use them for the invading of Canada.

Money was raised for the secret purchase of arms (rifles and cannon were cheap, now that the war was over, and a large supply of both was at hand), and skilled agents were sent through the country to recruit an army. There was no lack of good material. Irishmen who had been forced by hunger or oppression to leave their own land were eager to strike this blow at their English foes.

The Fenians had sub-societies in several large cities New York being the central point of the movement. They counted on non-Irish veterans of the civil war joining the conspiracy, because of England's unpopular attitude toward the United States during that war. In all, about 240,000 men

were quietly mustered in. The invaders began to arrive in small parties (to avert suspicion) at various points along the Canadian border. Of these there were no less than 35,000 veterans under Gen. Sweeney, an ex-officer of our own army.

By early May, 1866, Gen. Sweeney had his troops stationed on the frontier from Lake Champlain to Fort Erie; and at St. Albans, Vt., Malone, N. Y., and near Buffalo. All was ready for the hurrying of thousands of soldiers across into Canada from many different points. They were waiting only until their weapons could be sent to them. This transporting of weapons had to be done by stealth.

But arms and ammunition enough to equip 50,000 men were already on their way northward to the frontier.

News of the invasion had by this time reached the United States Government. By the terms of our treaty with Great Britain such a thing could not be permitted. The Government swooped down upon the huge consignments of rifles, and confiscated them. Thus the main army of invaders found itself weaponless and helpless. An effort was made to seize the guns and ammunition that the Government had confiscated. But it came to nothing.

Daily hundreds of men poured into the frontier cities, eager to advance into Canada. Bronzed, stalwart men, they were; fearless, well-drilled veterans. A lack of weapons turned them back. They could do nothing without guns. The guns had been captured. At one stroke the Government had deprived the plan of every chance for success.

Yet, Gen. O'Neill, who had been at Buffalo with one detachment of troops, managed to arm his men. He and his followers crossed into Canada, captured Fort Erie and fought two battles, both of which the Fenians won. Then O'Neill found that the expected reinforcements were not coming to his aid. With a little, ill-equipped force he could not go ahead, fighting England's whole Canadian power. He was obliged to abandon the strong position he had captured and retreat to American soil.

Almost as soon as O'Neill and his victorious but badly equipped men set foot in the United States they were made prisoners by the crew of the gunboat Michigan. An American army under Gen. Meade quietly stamped out the last smouldering spark of the great conspiracy. Sweeney and his staff already been arrested and his followers dispersed.

The Fenian invasion of Canada was a thing of the past. The conspiracy which had threatened to pour 240,000 armed men into the unprepared Dominion was a total failure. It had been as futile as it had been spectacular. The onplanned act of the United States Government in grabbing a few consignments of arms had struck a deathblow to one of the most audacious plots of the century.

A Secret Army of Veterans.

The Raid and Its Failure.

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HALF LETTER

HALF LETTER

Mont. Journal - 2/28/1910

## THE FENIAN RAID.

Recollections of Hon. B. F. Fifield,  
Who Was United States District At-  
torney at the Time.

Publication in the Morning Journal  
a short time ago of the story of the  
almost enjoyable meetings held in a  
theater voted by all present as one of the  
to the close of the meeting it having  
of the refreshments were served before  
the "Deck Not With Gems."

selections, after which Miss Folsom  
"Valentine"; Mrs. Terrill read two  
"Alyon Sweet," Miss Folsom; encore,  
dout as follows: Vocal solo, "I Love  
cal and literary program was carried  
a After the business meeting a mus-

night were chosen as alternates.  
Glor Barre, and Mrs. Mayo of North-  
pemerit of Waterbury, Mrs. Worthen  
Washington in April and Mrs. De-  
national convention which meets in  
Brown were elected delegates to the  
at Mrs. J. W. Brock and Mrs. Wilbur

at E. Hodgden, Miss J. P. Phinney.  
M. D. White, Miss C. L. Carr, Miss D.  
E. Terrill, Mrs. Albert Tuttle, Miss  
Edson, Mrs. J. L. Batchelder, Mrs. W.  
Gale, Mrs. Henry Gale, Mrs. G. L.  
esses of the occasion: Mrs. C. A.  
A. Gale, the following being the hos-  
Revolution met at the home of Mrs. C.  
The Daughters of the American  
at Washington.

Brown Selected to Represent Them  
Mrs. J. W. Brock and Mrs. Wilbur

## D. A. R. ELECT DELEGATES.

moral methods in Italy.  
olic church to open the subject of  
"It is playing with fire for the Cath-  
by the Methodists here and he added:  
ly the dishonorable methods employed  
urged that Archbishop Ireland spec-  
but Faith versus Atheism. The pastor  
Protestantism versus Catholicism.  
"The issue in Italy today is not

select them as the best  
full because the children's parents  
schools are

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# ADDRESS.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen*

*of the Vermont Historical Society :*

The history of Ireland has been characterized by local strifes, divisions and disappointments. No son of hers has ever occupied the throne of England. Unlike England and Scotland, the elements of discord have always shown themselves so prominently as to keep her people in continued subordination.

Whenever success has been within her grasp, some disappointed aspirant and his faction, has wafted it from her and given it to others. She never could concentrate her united strength and fealty on any one of her prominent men so as to insure marked success, though she has had her Emmets, O'Connells, and scores of like statesmen and philanthropists. No where, in all the annals of her history have the elements of discord more prominently and forcibly exhibited themselves, and retarded her nationality, than in the great Fenian movement. The yoke of British oppression had become so wincing and burdensome to them, as they for centuries have claimed, as to culminate in organizations for relief in Ireland—first designated under the local names of the "Phoenix Society," "Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood" and "Nationalists," but better known as Fenians, deriving their name from Fonna or Fienna, an Irish

military organization in the third century, commanded by Fionn or Finn, who was slain in battle in A. D. 283 ; and his command under his grandson, Osgar, were practically annihilated during a civil strife in A. D. 296.

The Fenian Brotherhood of the United States was founded under a charter from the State of New York, for a benevolent society in the city of New York, in the year 1857, by Michael Doheny, John O'Mahony and Michael Corcoran, subsequently a brigadier-general in the Union army. At the same time kindred organizations in Ireland were developing themselves in large proportions under the leadership of James Stephens — the funds for their maintenance being sent principally from this country. In 1858, Stephens came to this country and represented the existence of 35,000 enrolled and disciplined Fenians, and solicited further aid. The friends of Ireland were called together in New York, and the Brotherhood was fully organized under John O'Mahony as President. In 1860 O'Mahony visited Ireland, and there found a net work of clubs of the order, which met statedly and secretly to drill. He inspected the most important districts, and was present at a meeting of the Fenian leaders in Dublin, at which definite plans of action were agreed upon. From this meeting the organization received great impulse in both countries.

When the Brotherhood was first organized in New York City, it numbered forty members ; but in 1870, it extended its ramifications all over the United States, British America and Australia, while in Great Britain it established "circles" wherever Irishmen were to be found. They were as completely organized and officered as any soldiery ever was, not in active service.

In the United States up to 1863, the order was but little known or understood. Our citizens saw men assembling by



night and secretly drilling ; but they were confounded with the martial attitude and warlike appearance which then pervaded this entire country, and were supposed to be portions of the contending armies then existing, or in training therefor.

These circles, especially in the large cities, furnished several regiments at the commencement of our civil war, which were familiar with military tactics and discipline, and proved to be valuable accessions to the Union army. After the first battle of Bull Run, and the return from service of the 69th N. Y. Regiment of National Guards commanded by Col. Corcoran, composed largely of Fenians, Thomas F. Meagher organized the so-called "Irish Brigade"—likewise principally officered and filled by Fenians. This step was imitated all over the North, and the Fenian element was active in filling the ranks of volunteer regiments composing the Union army.

In 1862, Col. Corcoran was taken prisoner of war, and lodged in a Southern prison. After his liberation, his prominent position as a Fenian leader was the means of drawing many of the organizations into the Northern army with the ulterior expectation of using the experience so acquired, in the cause of the liberation of their fatherland.

Early in 1863, T. C. Luby, a prominent Irish leader, came to America, and not only visited the prominent "circles" in this country, but also entered the Union lines and held meetings at the head-quarters of Irish regiments.

On Nov. 3, 1863, the American Fenian Brotherhood held its First National Congress in Chicago—the delegates representing 15,000 Fenians, above one-half of whom were in the Union army. The order was declared to be strictly in accordance with our laws—free from partizan politics and differences in religion,

and declared the Irish people a distinct nationality with James Stephens as its leader. The central officers were to elect an annual Congress. The State officers were elected by the States, and "centers" were elected by "circles," in whom the affairs of the organization were entrusted.

Soon after a newspaper called the "Irish People," began to be published in Dublin, growing out of which, was a riot at a public meeting in Dublin, Feb. 23, 1864, from which A. M. Sullivan, a loyalist, was forcibly ejected by the Fenians. This somewhat aroused the apprehensions of the British authorities, and emboldened the Fenians in their open declarations in both countries, of their intentions of liberating Ireland. The uniform adherence and sympathy of the Fenians for universal freedom in this country, and especially their active coöperation and patriotic zeal, shoulder to shoulder with our own citizens in all the sanguinary struggles, in all our battles for the suppression of the Rebellion, and their devout and oft repeated attachment to the "old flag"—consecrated by the blood of their bravest men as well as ours, were frequently referred too, and bound them as with grapples of iron to the hearts and sympathies of the union-loving people of America. It may well be claimed that but for the timely aid of the Fenian organizations in this country, the government of our fathers might have been wrested from our control and destroyed forever.

On the other hand our experience with the British Government was their experience. British neutrality, so loudly prated by British subjects, was pointed at by the Fenians and sadly realized by our people as a mere sham, existing largely in boastful pretensions.

The palpable insincerity on the part of prominent British Government officials, including members of her ministry, and a large class of the aristocratic party of England and her colonies, created apprehensions of danger to the Union cause from Southern recognition and otherwise, and greatly intensified American sympathy and favor for the Fenians. As British sham neutrality became exposed, Fenianism grew and kept Britain in check. This was particularly noticeable after the Queen's proclamation of neutrality, of the 13th of May, 1861, and followed by the hasty and precipitate manner of according belligerent rights to the rebels, and before England had intelligence of a battle, an incident of bad faith almost unknown in the history of neutrality, as known and interpreted by modern civilized nations. This was followed on the 8th of November, 1861, by the startling news of the capture by Commodore Wilkes of Mason and Slidell, two accredited agents of the Confederate Government for the negotiations of treaties with European powers, on board the British mail steamer "Trent," on the high seas.

The British Government had always claimed the right of search, which was denied the United States in this instance. The United States Government, *per contra*, had always denied that right. Hence Commander Wilkes had, without authority, captured these two distinguished insurgents and had "made up a case" based upon British precedent and authority. At once her Majesty's Government made a demand for their release from Fort Warren in Boston Harbor, based upon her own rule of action "that might makes right." The American Government adhered to her own precedents and released them from imprisonment.



Afterwards, these *quasi* officials were received by Lord John Russell, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, and an interview was held on the 4th of May, 1862, whom he afterwards described as "the three gentlemen deputed by the Southern Confederacy to obtain their recognition as an independent State." On the 18th of May, 1861, Lord Russell sent a communication to Lord Lynes, British Minister at Washington, D. C., instructing him to take such means as he might judge most expedient, to transmit a copy of the dispatch to the British consul at Charleston or New Orleans, in order that it might be communicated to Mr. Jefferson Davis, at Montgomery. This use of the British Legation at Washington for such a purpose, was, as Mr. Seward afterwards said, an act which the United States would have been justified in regarding as an act of war, and the Fenians understood it. On the 7th of October, 1862, Minister Gladstone said in a speech at Newcastle, "we may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army. They are making, it appears, a navy, and they have made what is more than either — they have made a nation. (Loud cheers.) We may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern States so far as regards their separation from the North. I cannot but believe that that event is as certain as any event yet future and contingent can be." O, what a prophet! O, what a Fenian poser!

On the 27th of March, 1863, Mr. Laird, the builder of the Alabama and other rams, which were seized by our Government, said in the British parliament, "I have only to say that I would rather be handed down to posterity as the builder of a dozen Alabamas than as the man who applies himself deliberately to

set class against class, and to cry up the institutions of another country, which when they come to be tested, are of no value whatever, and which reduced liberty to an utter absurdity."

Afterwards, John Bright, the off-ox in the British team, to whom he referred — thus replied, "I shall confine myself to that one vessel, the Alabama. She was built in this country; all her munitions of war were from this country; almost every man on board her was a subject of her Majesty. She sailed from one of our chief ports. She is reported to have been built by a firm in whom a member of this House was, and I presume is, interested. I did not complain that the member from Birkenham (Mr. Laird) had struck up a friendship with Captain Semmes, who may be described as another sailor once was of similar pursuits, as being 'the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship.'"

Canada soon became largely imbued with the same spirit of unfriendliness, though there were as strong and devoted union men on her soil as ever uttered union sentiments. On her territory thousands of Southern insurgents, refugees and sympathizers congregated together, to menace the Northern army and Northern people, and Fenianism followed. Here the South received the fullest measure of sympathy. Here they seem to have either infatuated or completely over-awed the local government so that they could make incursions on United States territory, where and when they pleased. Here organized the Lake Erie and St. Albans raids. Here originated the conspiracy to burn Northern cities and send infected clothing into the United States to poison Northern aqueducts, and above all, to assassinate President Lincoln and his Cabinet. Here Clay and Thompson, Saunders and Porterfield, Clary and Tucker and their coadjutors, in April, 1865, sent forth J. Wilkes Booth, Surratt and Harold, as

embassadors of death, to murder Lincoln, Johnson, Seward, Stanton, Grant and Chase, and the British Government declared them belligerents. Here, lest my assertions may be questioned, is the evidence of it as given in a book entitled "Assassination of President Lincoln and Trial of the Conspirators," printed in 1865 by official sanction. Dr. James B. Merritt, a Canadian, testified on that trial, "I think I saw the prisoner, D. C. Harold in Canada. Saunders said that Booth was heart and soul in this project of assassination, and felt as much as any person could feel, for the reason that he was a cousin to Beal that was hung in New York. He said that if they could dispose of Lincoln, it would be an easy matter to dispose of Johnson, he was such a drunken sot; it would be an easy matter to dispose of him in some of his drunken revelries," and Saunders knew.

Richard Montgomery testified, "I frequently heard the subject of raids upon our frontier and the burning of cities spoken of by Thompson, Clay, Clary, Tucker and Saunders. \* \* Before the St. Albans raid I knew of it."

Sanford Conover testified, "Of the accused who visited these persons (in Montreal) I knew John Wilkes Booth and Jolin H. Surratt. Booth I saw but once. That was in the latter part of October, 1864. I think I saw him with Saunders and also at Thompson's. I saw him principally about St. Lawrence Hall."

Henry Finegas testified, "I heard Clay say 'I suppose they are getting ready for the inauguration of Lincoln, next month.' Saunders says, 'Yes, if the boys only have luck Lincoln won't trouble them much longer.' Clay asked, 'Is everything well?' Saunders replied, 'O, yes, Booth is bossing the job.'" On Booth's body after he was shot by Boston Corbett were found bills of

exchange drawn by the Ontario Bank of Montreal, proven to have been sold to him at Montreal and bearing date October 29, 1864, eight days after the St. Albans raid.

The writer had personal knowledge of the existence of a large Fenian organization in Montreal in October, 1864, and employed in behalf of the sufferers by the St. Albans raid, an attorney known to many to be the acknowledged leader of the organization in that city. In many seemingly reckless adventures as counsel, witness and sufferer among the Southern refugees and their friends in that city, in pursuit of justice and the reclamation of property, I was always conscious that while the strong arm of the British law might be doubtful protection to the person—as it was to our property—any personal violence would be visited by a speedy retaliation on the part of thousands of Fenians, many of whom were congregated at the various legal proceedings connected with that raid, proffering their sympathy and support.

In 1862 Mr. Seward called the attention of the British government to the inadequacy of the English and Canadian statutes to preserve neutrality and requested that they might be made more stringent. Lord Palmerston declined, so that Canada in fact had none in force until February, 1865, after the war was nearly over and the British “war in disguise” was nearly done. So defective was their statute that a learned judge of one of her majesty’s supreme courts declared “that a whole fleet of ships of war could be driven through the statute.” Caleb Cushing wisely remarked before the tribunal of arbitration, “That, as a matter of fact, a whole fleet of ships of war was driven through the statute,” as was in proof before this tribunal.

This was in wide contrast with the conduct of the United States under similar circumstances of a rebellion in Canada in

1837-8. Mr. Fox, the British Minister, to use his own language, "solemnly appealed to the supreme government promptly to interpose its sovereign authority for arresting the disorders," and inquired "what means it proposed to employ for that purpose." Congress immediately passed a neutrality act and President Van Buren issued a neutrality proclamation, and the whole frontier in this vicinity was bristling with the bayonets of our volunteers to preserve strict neutrality towards our neighbors.

All these breaches of neutrality and good faith were food upon which the Fenians were growing in numbers and strength, and in favor with the United States government, because they greatly paralyzed the efforts of Great Britain in her attempts to aid the South in their schemes of secession. In view of all these enormities Lord Stanley made bitter complaint, in regard to the Fenian policy of the United States, to which Mr. Seward forcibly replied in a dispatch, under date of January 12, 1867. He said, "I do not deem it necessary to reply at length to the reflections which Lord Stanley makes upon the conduct of this government in regard to the proceedings of the so called Fenians. The Fenian movement neither begins nor ends in the United States; but they are natives of Great Britain, though some of them have assumed naturalization in the United States. *This quarrel with Great Britain is not an American but a British one, as old—I sincerely hope it may not be as lasting—as the union of the United Kingdom.* Their aim is not American but British revolution. In seeking to make the territory of the United States a base for the organization of a republic in Ireland, and of military and naval operations for its establishment there, they allege that they have followed, as an example, *precedents of British subjects in regard to our civil war, allowed by her majesty's government.*"

Those flagrant breaches of neutrality, and wanton infractions of international law and comity, not only inflamed the loyal North, but also every Fenian against Great Britain and the South, whose cause that government had early espoused. The love of liberty which dwelt in the American heart and found a response in the patriotic bosom of nearly every Irishman in this country, made Americans and Irishmen allies in the suppression of the great rebellion, and induced the United States government and people to favor the Fenian cause for the purpose of showing to England that she too had her elements of discord in her midst, which like Hamlet's ghost would appear and trouble its author. It also led the Fenians to believe that British precedents of neutrality would be followed by the United States government whenever occasion presented itself. Hence Great Britain became alarmed at the magnitude of the Fenian movement and began to look to her own situation, and at the same time assure the United States of her extreme friendship diplomatically, which was much like the caricature of the fox at the poultry meeting where he devoutly rises and says "let us pray."

Hence the United States did for a time pursue the same lax and unfriendly policy which Great Britain had followed during the war. In violation of her laws she too had allowed these armed bands to organize on her territory for the avowed purpose of operating against England, and with the avowed object of producing "a counter irritant" on the body politic of England, and lead her to realize that she too had her intestine foes as well as other nations, and that conspiracies and insurrections were likely at any time to engage her attention and tax her strength and resources.



Those who intimately knew the great mind which presided over the destinies of our foreign relations during the darkest days of our rebellion, and guarded as with an Argus eye its difficulties and combinations, make bold in saying that this Fenian movement was encouraged as a great strategic movement to defeat British intervention, which, it is claimed, that nation had promised to the struggling, languishing South. Indeed, Mr. Seward wrote Minister Adams at the court of St. James in 1866, asking the opinion of the latter, as to the policy of "making up a case" with the Fenians against Great Britain similar to those then arising with Great Britain growing out of their neutral relations towards the United States during our civil war, with a view of realizing compensation from British depredations—direct and indirect—upon our navy, territory and people during our war. Minister Adams at once replied that such a course would lack the element of belligerency—unless that was accorded to the Fenians—and then it would be a concession that Britain was right in the course she had pursued. For this and other minor things the Fenians entertained feelings of profound indignity towards Mr. Adams.

But who can say, then, that the great army of Fenians then menacing Great Britain in all directions was not one of the most potent means of quelling the British Lion in his lair, and that it led in part to the final triumph of our Northern army? Who can doubt, then, that the Fenian cause was a powerful agency in collecting our great debt against Great Britain growing out of the war?

In January, 1865, the second Fenian congress met at Cincinnati, when "the circles" had increased five fold, and the financial receipts exceeded the total of seven previous years, as the

result of British feigned neutrality towards the United States. The middle classes in Ireland were in favor of revolution. The termination of war in this country left free those valiant Irish officers and soldiers on whom were centered mainly the hopes and expectations of the revolutionists. Disaffections and Fenian contagions began to spread among the Irish troops mainly composing the British army, and large numbers of them secretly joined the Fenian organizations. On the 8th of September, 1865, Stephens issued a proclamation in which he concludes, "The flag of Ireland, of the Irish republic, must this year be raised," and the cry of "Erin go Bragh" was resounded throughout the land.

On the 15th of September, 1865, Jeremiah O. D'Rossa and T. C. Luby were arrested in Dublin and incarcerated. On the next day appeared two proclamations from the viceroy, Lord Wadhouse, announcing the existence of the brotherhood; suspending the writ of *habeas corpus*; offering a reward for the apprehension of its members, and declaring martial law in the city and county of Cork. Simultaneously many other arrests were made, and among them one C. W. O'Connell, an *aide-de-camp* of O'Mahony, as he landed at Queenstown, upon whom was found papers incriminating many persons. Great energy was displayed by the British authorities in the dispatch of vessels of war, and in the establishment of a cordon of gun boats around the coasts of Ireland with its scores of noble harbors and beautiful bays. On November 11, 1865, Stephens, living near Dublin under an assumed name, was arrested and committed to prison, and on the 24th he escaped to France.

As soon as this intelligence reached the United States, the third Fenian Congress was summoned at Philadelphia. During

its session P. J. Meehan, editor of the *Irish American*, and accredited agent of the brotherhood in Ireland, returned and reported everything there as "powerful, the management masterly, and the position solid;" and *this* when the revolutionists were utterly hopeless. Thirty States were represented by three hundred and fifty circles, with a membership of 14,620. A Fenian sisterhood was established, which proved a successful auxiliary in the raising of funds. John Mitchell was released from Fortress Monroe by President Johnson, and went to Ireland. The prisoners under arrest in Ireland were tried and sentenced to prison for twenty years. In the mean time, the rupture between O'Mahony and a majority of the Senate, had been gradually widening. His party wished to operate in Ireland. The senatorial party favored the scheme of an armed expedition in Canada, and were afterwards known as "the Canada party." Delegates were in attendance from Canada in respectable numbers. The characteristic disaffection became still more alarming. The excitement of the Irish element in America became almost uncontrollable, and O'Mahony was impeached by the Senate, and succeeded by Col. Wm. R. Roberts of New York. While Roberts was preparing to move on Canada, O'Mahony was induced to move on *Campo Bello*, New Brunswick. Some arms were sent to Eastport, Me., and the command of the expedition was assumed by Major B. D. Kellian. Large numbers assembled at Eastport, but O'Mahony had ordered their guns not to be sent from New York. General Meade was dispatched by the United States authorities to watch their movements and they soon dispersed.

On May 10, 1866, Stephens arrived in New York and all hopes of extrication from their differences centered upon him, but he

found the O'Mahony party urging that all efforts should be turned towards helping "the men in the gap" in Ireland. He said that all the men wanted in Ireland—numbering hundreds of thousands—was money and coöperation to win their independence. Each party bitterly assailed the motives and plans of the other.

The Roberts party, under the military direction of Gen. Thomas W. Sweney, a late officer of the Union army, was placed in command of the Canada expedition about the middle of May. On the 19th of May, 1866, twelve hundred stands of arms were seized by the revenue officials, at Rouse's Point, N. Y. From the 29th to the 31st of May, 1866, bodies of Fenians, from various parts of the United States, moved towards Canada. On the morning of the 30th of May, the streets of St. Albans were suddenly thronged by soldiers in civilian's dress to the number of about one thousand. They made a descent upon us like an army in Flanders, without previous notice or expectation. They were reticent, and said that they had come to St. Albans to look over the grounds, and note the events made memorable by the Canadian rebel raid in 1864. They had been induced to come here because they were confident we would mete out to them the same kind of neutrality, that Canada had taught and practiced, at the time of the St. Albans raid, which had become established law throughout the British empire; and as we usually followed British precedents, we should not interfere with them in their struggles for independence. Here was history repeating itself on the old grounds, and "chickens coming home to roost." Here were Canadian detectives and spies congregated, and giving us lessons on neutrality as found in the Gospel according to Courser and in the Acts of Young and his banditti—the former afterwards pro-

moted to high official position in Canada, and the latter recompensed by an appointment as a United States Commissioner to the Paris Exposition in 1878.

The expedition at this point was under command of Generals Sweney and Spear, and their subordinate officers in attendance — among whom were several young men who had been completely ruined financially by the piratical depredations on merchant vessels and their cargoes, under the British neutrality law, as interpreted and administered by such political ministers as Russell and Gladstone, who predicted that there would be no longer a government of the United States which Great Britain would be bound to respect. Here they met a fellow sympathizer in the person of Capt. E. Lincoln, who was a sea captain on board the "T. C. Wales" of Boston, Mass., a merchant vessel on her way to Boston, from Calcutta in the East Indies, laden with leather and products of that country, and whose vessel and all its effects were destroyed by fire, by Capt. Semmes of the cruiser Alabama, manned in part by British subjects, on the high seas. Capt. Lincoln and wife were taken prisoners of war and transferred to the cruiser — his wife giving birth to a child before landing at Nassau, a British port and a rebel rendezvous in the West India Islands. Here these men were striving to collect their debt from Great Britain, and to aid us in collecting ours. Here the Fenians received a cordial welcome from many of the citizens of St. Albans, and especially the Fenian Brotherhood, under the leadership of their acting head center, Peter Ward, and treasurer John Brown and others. Here many of the brotherhood from neighboring towns assembled with alacrity, to meet their co-patriots in the cause of Ireland. Here were assembled the Fenian scouts and spies and all the *retinue* of secret ser-

vice. Here one of the spies exhibited to the writer maps of the *route*, and plans of the fortifications and garrisons at St. Johns and Montreal, and numerous letters from fellow Fenians in various parts of Canada enclosing funds, and entreating them to make a stand on Canadian soil, and the brotherhood in Canada would rise up *en masse* and flee to their rescue, striking terror to the people and making Canada a free independent Irish Republic.

One of these letters was from a prominent British officer at St. Johns, who advised the informant to let him know the night they would be there, when he would be on duty with the right men, and surrender the entire fortification into the hands of the Fenians. Here dispatches and couriers were going forth towards Canada, and nightly the invaders were forwarding their small ordnance and muskets, before concealed in the barns and outhouses, and secret depositories along the frontier. A portion of the Fenian guard had proceeded through Swanton as far as Highgate, when a young lad in great haste, hurried to St. Armand, Canada, and gave an exaggerated account of the numbers advancing, to Capt. Peter Smith and Surgeon Brigham, in command of the volunteers at that place, and who, as the story goes, and it has never been denied — began immediately to fall back on St. Johns, about twenty miles distant. These two heroes of a thousand "imaginary battles" were the first to lead the retreat, and each with their panting war-steeds, undertook to make the best time in the race. When they reached St. Alexander, the Surgeon was ahead, and took the heat and the race — time wisely withheld to prevent the contestants from getting "a record." The doctor, after a diagnosis of the disease, pronounced it "a run of cannon fever."



Here, too, the United States troops and military band assembled in respectable numbers and bivouacked on the village "green," which added greatly to the martial air of the occasion and the society of the village. Here Fenians in blue looked down upon Fenians in rags, with a complacent look and sympathizing smile, as if to say "blank cartridges and lofty shooting" will be our interpretation of American neutrality from an American standpoint. Here Gen. George G. Meade, the hero of Gettysburgh, and Lieut. Porter, the son of the distinguished admiral, and other officers assembled, each armed with orders ready to watch every overt act of the Fenians, and seasonably promulgate them. They quartered at the Welden House, and a grand ball was given in their honor, and the night passed "as merrily as a marriage bell." Here the Fenians remained for three days awaiting the arrival of arms, doubtless shipped by O'Mahony to Ireland, or some other distant spot. Here they made an attack on Freligsburgh, Canada, to instruct them in neutral rights and neighborhood comity, as applied to raids and plunder, and secured a large amount of what they called their legal tender, "straw hats and high wines." They did no other damage worth mentioning at that time save to lay the foundation for a claim against "the home" government of about one million dollars which was paid and charged to the United States in offset and disallowed.

On their retreat the following day, their plunder was conspicuously displayed as trophies of a hard fought battle and victory won, and the Fenians began to disburse to their homes. Many of them were able to defray the expense to their homes, but large numbers received aid and provisions from our local authorities and citizens to prevent depredations, and returned to their homes

to "fight another day." As Artemas Ward said at the grave of Shakespeare, "it was a success."

On the 1st of June, 1866, 1200 or 1500 Fenians under Col. O'Neil crossed Niagara river at Buffalo, N. Y., and took possession of an unoccupied work called Fort Erie, near the spot where Sir Allen McNab gave lessons in neutrality in 1838, by going upon American territory and waters, and firing the American steamer "Caroline," and then cutting her loose from her moorings, sent her over the Falls of Niagara. O, history! Thou faithful chronicler of the past, how thou repeatest thyself.

On the 2d, the Fenians were attacked at a place called Limestone Ridge, and held their position, losing several killed and wounded, and many prisoners. The history of the attack, from a Canadian standpoint, was given by Lord Monck, Governor-General of Canada, to Hon. Edward Cardwell, British Colonial Secretary, in an official dispatch dated June 4th, 1866, as follows :

"Immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of an invasion, Major-General Napier pushed on by rail to Chippewa, a force consisting of artillery and regular troops under Col. Peacocke, 16th regiment. \* \* \* A body of volunteers had come upon the Fenian encampment in the bush, and immediately attacked them, but were outnumbered and compelled to retire on Port Colburn. This occurred sometime on Saturday, June 2d. Col. Peacocke, in the meantime was advancing in the direction of Fort Erie from Chippewa, along the banks of the Niagara river, but was not able to reach the former place before night-fall."

On the 14th of June, Lord Monck thus wrote Mr. Cardwell :  
 "From all the information I have received, I am now satisfied

that a very large and comprehensive plan of attack had been arranged by the party which is popularly known as the Sweney-Roberts section of the Fenian brotherhood. The place of invasion, in addition to the attempt on the Niagara frontier—the only one which actually occurred—appears to have embraced attacks on the line of the Richelieu and Lake Champlain, and also on the frontier in the neighborhood of Prescott and Cornwall, where I have reason to think the principal demonstration was intended.

For the latter object, large bodies of men sent by railroad from almost all parts of the United States were assembled at a place called Malone, in the State of New York, and at Potsdam, also in the State of New York; and with a view to the former, St. Albans and its neighborhood in the State of Vermont, was selected as the place of assemblage. Large supplies of arms, accoutrements and ammunition were also attempted to be forwarded by railroad to those points, but owing to the active interference of the authorities of the United States, as soon as it became apparent that a breach of international law had been committed by those persons, a very large portion of those supplies never reached their destination. It is not easy to arrive at a trustworthy estimate of the number of men who actually arrived at their different points of rendezvous. It has been reported at times that there were at Potsdam, Malone, and the intervening country, as many as ten thousand men, and similar rumors have been from time to time circulated, of the force at St. Albans, and its neighborhood. From the best opinion I can form, however, I shall be inclined to think that the number of Fenians in the vicinity of St. Albans never exceeded two thousand men, and

that three thousand would be a fair allowance for those assembled at Potsdam, Malone, and the surrounding countries.

The men have been represented to me as having, many of them, served in the late civil war in the United States — to have had a considerable amount of small arms of a good and efficient description. I have not heard of their possessing any artillery and am informed that they were deficient in the supplies of ammunition, and totally destitute of all the other equipments of an organized force. They appeared to have relied very much on assistance from inhabitants of the Province — as the force which invaded Fort Erie brought with them, as I am now told, a large quantity of spare arms to put into the hands of their sympathizers whom they expected to join them.

The determination of the Government of the United States to stop the transportation of men and supplies to the places of assemblage, rendered even the temporary success on the part of the Fenians impossible, while the large forces which the Lieutenant-General commanding was able to concentrate at each of the points threatened, had the effect of deterring from an attack the portions of the conspirators who had already arrived at their places of rendezvous. No invasion in force occurred except at Fort Erie. A slight incursion took place at a place called St. Armand, about thirteen miles from St. Johns, on the borders of the county of Missisquoi, which ended in the capture of about sixteen prisoners without any loss on our side. Although I deplore the loss which the volunteer force suffered when engaged on the 2d of June at Limestone Ridge, amounting to six killed and thirty-one wounded, I think it is matter of congratulation that a movement which might have been so formidable, has collapsed with so small an amount of loss either of life or property."

Lord Monck left it to the Canadian press to extol the bravery and courage of the volunteers, which for days teemed with graphic accounts of the adventures of a company called the "Queen's Own" of Toronto, and the volunteers generally.

In September following Roberts summoned a congress at Troy, N. Y., which was numerously attended. The case of Col. R. B. Lynch and a priest named McMahan who had been taken prisoners at Limestone Ridge, tried and condemned to death while only innocently watching the Fenian movements served for a long time to keep alive public attention in the United States, and about \$250,000 were raised by the brotherhood for their cause, and the excitement served to increase the numbers and influence of the Fenians largely in Canada. Through the good offices of the United States government these sentences were finally commuted.

In December following Stephens renewed his efforts to make Ireland the base of operations, and active preparations began. A plan to seize the Castle of Chester garrisoned by an Irish Regiment, was frustrated by the treachery of one Congdon. Killarney had been chosen as the center of Fenian operations in the south, and Capt. O'Conner was intrusted with the command. A considerable force of insurgents took refuge in the Galtee hills, whence they had been driven by a heavy fall of snow, and a general rising took place in Dublin in accordance with the orders of their leaders. In all these movements their plans were previously made known to the British authorities by recreant and disappointed men in the secrets of the Brotherhood. For these offenses T. F. Burke and John McCafferty were tried by a military commission and condemned to death, and their sentences were afterwards commuted to penal servitude for life. J. Boyle O'Reilly, since chief editor of the Boston *Pilot*, was banished to

Australia whence he made his escape from imprisonment into the woods, living for days on nuts, and finally putting out to sea in a small boat, and after three days' sail saw a United States merchant vessel heave in sight, and hoisting a signal of distress was taken on board her and brought to the United States. He came to St. Albans in 1870, and figured extensively in the second Fenian raid as will hereafter appear.

About this time the president of the United States was vainly applied to for the purpose of obtaining belligerent rights for the Fenians. Stephens had been relieved of the management of the organization and the future direction of the Fenians was intrusted to a committee until the fifth congress met in New York in February, 1867, when an executive committee headed by one A. A. Griffin was constituted.

Towards the end of May, 1867, a second invasion of Canada began to be agitated. Large bodies of men were seen drilling in Detroit and Buffalo, and recruiting became active and successful, and St. Albans and Ogdensburgh were spoken of as deposits of military stores and probable points of departure for a new expedition. In the mean time the parent organization had sent an expedition to Ireland.

On the 13th of April, 1867 the brig "Erin's Hope" left New York with five thousand five hundred stands of arms, three batteries of artillery, one thousand sabres, five millions rounds of small ammunition, a supply of artillery ammunition, and thirty-nine officers of every grade of infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineers. She reached the English and Irish coast and made several landings. Several of the officers set ashore were captured, but the military stores were brought back to New York.



In June, 1867, a convention of delegates in Manchester, England, elected Thomas J. Kelley central executive of the Irish republic. This did not meet the approval of the revolutionists. Thus arose in the home organization a division similar to that which paralyzed the Fenian brotherhood in America. The sixth national congress elected John Savage as chief executive. On the night of September 13, the police of Manchester undertook to arrest four suspicious men; two escaped and the others proved to be Col. Thomas J. Kelley and Capt. Deasy. On the 18th the van in which they were conducted was attacked and the prisoners were released, Sergeant Britt in charge of the van being killed. Subsequently five persons Allen, O'Brian, Larkin, Maguire and Condon were tried in Manchester and condemned to death though protesting their innocence. The three first were executed and the two last reprieved. A reign of terror pervaded throughout the United Kingdom and Canada, and riotous assemblages became frequent and troublesome. On the 11th of March, 1867, the Duke of Edinburgh was dangerously wounded by a supposed Fenian. On the 7th of April, 1867, Thomas Darcy McGee, a member of the Canadian Ministry, was killed at Ottawa in the public streets, his opposition to Fenianism being the motive for the deed. About this time Queen Victoria was assaulted by a supposed Fenian with a revolver.

These unfortunate events so wrought on the public mind in England that Michael Barrett was executed May 26, 1867, and British activity began to show itself. Things remained comparatively quiet until the spring of 1870, when the senatorial party of the Brotherhood on the 24th of May, assembled another expedition on the Canadian frontier.

On the 25th of May, 1870, the Fenians under General O'Neil, to the number of about two thousand in and about the expedition, attempted to effect a lodgement near Pigeon Hill, Canada, near the scene of their first incursion in 1866. Many hundreds of them were in and about St. Albans the day before, while at Malone and other points farther west on the borders they were forming large gatherings, with the evident intention of making a simultaneous attack upon Canada at many different points on the frontier.

The massing of Fenians commenced on Monday, May 23, when crowds arrived at St. Albans, Trout River, Malone and all along the frontier as far west as St. Paul, Minnesota. Telegrams from nearly all the principal northern cities indicated remarkable activity among the Fenians and also announced their departure to parts unknown. On the 23d of May, 1870, the last train from Burlington to St. Albans at night brought to St. Albans a company of forty-four men from that place. They soon formed in military order in the depot, and marched easterly towards Fairfield, much to the surprise of our citizens, as the uninitiated had no inkling of any special activity in this vicinity. The morning train of the 24th from the south brought about one hundred and twenty men from Burlington and Port Henry, N. Y., a part of whom started immediately in squads towards Fairfield, behaving well and paying their bills. They breakfasted among the farmers. The rest tarried a while in St. Albans and soon started towards Sheldon. Some of them had small bundles slung across their shoulders in the form of haversacks, containing provisions and clothing. Those going towards Fairfield took arms from the out buildings of a Fenian about two miles from St. Albans, and others deferred equipping themselves with the expectation of

getting some arms nearer the lines, During the night the movement of supplies was active. Men and teams were actively engaged in the eastern towns in Franklin County, in transporting arms and supplies from where they were concealed towards the lines. Eight loads were seen passing through Westford towards the north. In the afternoon seventeen loaded teams were seen on the east of Fairfield Pond, and under the cover of darkness they moved northward. The number of teams thus loaded were variously estimated from seventy to eighty-five. Early on the morning of the 24th several pieces of artillery, together with several wagon loads of war-like materials, passed through the easterly part of St. Albans; among them were said to be four breech loading Parrott guns with three wagons of ammunition, *en route* for the future seat of war. Several other pieces of light artillery were seen between Fairfield and Hubbard's Corner in Franklin.

Appearances readily indicated preparations for about five thousand men, and if a sudden movement had been made at that time, immense damage would have been done to the Canadian government and people, and a probable stand would have been made on Canadian soil. The following morning large numbers arrived by train from Troy, N. Y., accompanied by Major Moore, and from points beyond White River Junction, Vt., debarking from the cars at various points between Essex Junction and St. Albans, principally at the latter place. The most of them were men of military skill and experience. Among them was Capt. John Lonergan of Burlington, Vt., well known in this vicinity as a courageous and brave Union officer.

General O'Niel debarked from the cars at Georgia depot, on the night of the 24th of May, and proceeded *incog.* by private con-

veyance to Franklin, where he arrived the following morning. His presence was only known to the leaders at first. This was done to evade the United States authorities and surprise the enemy.

Our government was fully informed of the condition of affairs, and there is good authority for saying that officers delegated to look after the Fenians were instructed by government officials at Washington, D. C., to delay making arrests until there was an imperative necessity for it.

On Wednesday the 25th, the day of the battle, there was a general rally of our citizens from St. Albans and surrounding towns towards the "front," among them invited guests, reporters and strangers, ready to witness the battle. The press, ever on the alert for news, was represented by correspondents of the *New York Herald and Tribune*, *Boston Journal, Advertiser and Transcript*, the *Rutland Herald* and *St. Albans Messenger*. Great caution was exercised to keep a respectful distance from the field when the firing began, as they were somewhat careless about putting bullets in their guns on both sides.

The movement of the Canadian authorities had been remarkably active. Their volunteers were called out on Tuesday, the 24th of May, and Capt. Muir's cavalry left Montreal at seven o'clock that evening. On the morning of the 25th, at five o'clock, a special train with the first battalion Prince Rifle Brigade, under command of Lord A. Russell, with the Royal Highness Prince Arthur on the staff, left Bonaventure station, Montreal, *en route* for St. Johns, where volunteers had preceded them, to be there posted as Gen. Lindsley might see proper. They numbered seven hundred strong. Col. Smith with a detachment of troops having arrived at Stanbridge—about eight miles from

the border—late on the previous night, left early in the morning accompanied by Lieut.-Col. Chamberlain's corps for Cook's Corners, the old camping ground at the first Fenian raid. When they arrived at this place they found already before them the "Home Guards" of Dunham, commanded by Capt. Westover. Gen. Lindsley disposed of the balance of the forces, volunteers and regulars, at other points along the Huntington borders.

On the morning of the 25th, the Fenians were quartered in large numbers about Franklin Center, a short distance from the border and on the road leading thence to Cook's Corners, on the Canadian side. They had scattered their cases of arms and ammunition, which were being opened and distributed among the men. It is estimated that at this point the Fenians numbered about two thousand strong, and had arms for about two thousand more. Gen. O'Neil with Gen. Donelly, his chief of staff, Cols. Brown and Sullivan, and Capt. Lonergan spent a part of the night at Franklin Center, and early in the morning proceeded with the advance towards the line.

As the Fenians were approaching the lines, Gen. Geo. P. Foster, United States Marshal, received a dispatch ordering the arrest of the leaders. Before doing so he remonstrated with them to dissuade them from advancing. They disregarded the proclamation of President Grant, which had then been issued, and Gen. Foster crossed the lines and informed Col. Smith that he had no troops at hand to prevent the Fenians from crossing, and the Canadians prepared at once for the onslaught. The "Home Guards" had been in position on the hill-side, about five hundred yards from the boundary line, since the night of the 24th, where in the morning they were joined by a portion of the forces under Col. Smith and Lieut.-Col. Chamberlain, and at

other near points there were ample reserves in waiting, ready to advance on an hour's notice.

The position of the Canadians was almost impregnable—the rocks and brushwood furnishing them a splendid natural shelter which they improved by throwing up rifle pits. They fought, therefore, almost under cover, and the result showed with perfect safety to themselves, and some loss to the Fenians. Before noon the Fenians marched onward. O'Neil was, or professed to have been, in high spirits. The house of Alvah Richards, about ten rods south of the border line, was chosen as the place from which to view the battle. The Fenians came down by Richards' house and passed along the road leading to Cook's Corners. Some eight rods north of the Canada line is a gully through which runs a small brook, named in some of the accounts "Chick-a-Biddy," over which the road is bridged and beyond which are the heights that were occupied by the Canadians. From Richards' house to the Canadian position was only about a quarter of a mile.

The American accounts as given by eye witnesses from an American standpoint, are that at eleven o'clock, Gen. Geo. P. Foster, United States marshal for Vermont, arrived and caused the road, which the Fenians had rendered impassable for some time, to be opened. Almost immediately orders were given to fall in and the march began. In about a hundred rods of the line, orders were given to load, and this being done the march was resumed. Very soon the red coats of the Canadians were seen skirting the edge of the woods on the side-hill to the left of the road, and when the Fenians arrived near the brick house of Alvah Richards they halted and Gen. O'Neil made a speech.

A newspaper reporter stood by his side and took it down as follows :

*"Soldiers:—*This is the advance guard of the Irish American army for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of the oppressor. For your own country you now enter that of the enemy. The eyes of your countrymen are upon you. Forward, march!"

The advanced position having been assigned to Capt. Wm. Cronan's Burlington Company, he stepped forward and addressed Gen. O'Neil as follows :

*"General:—*I am proud that Vermont has the honor of leading this advance. Ireland may depend upon us to do our duty."

Col. Brown, with a musket in his hands, then addressed that company and said "that he had been honored with the command of the skirmish line. He knew the men were brave and all he asked of them was to keep cool and obey orders."

The advance was then resumed by the flank in the road, and just as Capt Cronan's company passed "Richards' house," and were descending the little hill towards the line, which was about ten rods distant, and a skirmish line was being formed, the fight commenced by the Canadians opening a sharp volley from their concealed positions, and much nearer than the Fenians had supposed. Capt. Cronan's men immediately faced to the left and returned the fire. Gen. O'Neil was just in the rear, partially sheltered by the house, but he immediately took an exposed position and began to survey the position of the enemy through his opera glass.

The two companies that were following became excited, and would have continued so, but their officers were cool, and in an instant the men became so, and moved forward in good order to the hillside on the left. The firing became general on both

sides and continued for about an hour. It was said that Capt. Cronan crossed the line and then marched by the flank in a semi-circle, back again and to a more advantageous position, a little farther to the left.

In the midst of the engagement a newspaper reporter received "a bullet" rather than "a brick" in his hat. The bullet being less congenial than "the brick," this reporter displayed more modesty and discretion than is usually displayed by reporters, and retired to the rear with others of his associates. Thereafter they reported the further proceedings of the battle from "information and belief."

Hence I shall be compelled to give the further proceedings of the day from a garbled account written, and a picture of the battle ground and the arrest of O'Neil, given by an artist of the *Canadian Illustrated News*, "taken on the spot" as usual. He says the Fenians beginning to retreat after the first few volleys, Gen. O'Neil turned to rally them by the following speech, which I give, though it has never been produced in any American report of the battle :

"*Men of Ireland* :—I am ashamed of you. You have acted disgracefully, but you will have another chance of showing whether you are cravens or not. Comrades, we must not, we dare not, go back now with the stain of cowardice on us. Comrades, I will lead you again, and if you will not follow me, I will go with my officers and die in your front. I leave you now under command of Boyle O'Reilly."

About this time the accounts agree that Gen. O'Neil, under the mistaken apprehension that he was Gen. Donnelly, as he was near "Richards' house," was arrested by Gen. Foster, United States marshal, and his deputy, Thomas Failey, who by a grand



*coup de main* thrust the General into a close carriage in readiness, amidst the Fenian forces and flying bullets, and drove for some distance through numbers of approaching Fenians who little suspected that their chief was being carried from the field under arrest.

When Gen. Foster first made his appearance within the Fenian lines he was ordered to halt, and after announcing his official character, was placed under arrest and conducted to the Fenian headquarters, where he had an interview with Gen. O'Neil under the mistaken apprehension that it was Gen. Donnelly whom he was addressing, and in total ignorance as he says that Gen. O'Neil was there present. He then entered the Canadian lines and was there again placed under arrest by the guard and conducted into the presence of the officer of the day, who proved to be the chivalrous Capt. Peter Smith with whom he was acquainted and by whom he was conducted to Col. Smith in command. He then informed the Canadians that he had been taken by surprise as to the Fenian movements and was without any warrants for their arrest, and was powerless to prevent the Fenian advance, and soon returned to the Fenian headquarters. Gen. Foster says that he never knew his prisoner was Gen. O'Neil until they had proceeded some distance towards St. Albans, when Gen. O'Neil made known the fact to him. These facts were obtained from Gen. Foster personally, shortly before his death.

Gen. Foster then told Gen. O'Neil that if he offered any resistance he might be shot, and he was hastily driven to St. Albans without warrant for his arrest and detention.

The Canadian accounts state that O'Reilly made another advance of the Fenians, and a straggling fire kept up for a time; but few casualties of a serious character occurred to the Fenians,

and none at all to the Canadians who could scarcely be seen, and that in the afternoon three companies of Fenians occupied the roads opposite the Canadians, and for a time kept up a brisk and harmless fire.

Gen. Donnelly was in command a short time during the engagement after O'Neil's arrest, but was severely wounded. Hence O'Reilly must have held a subordinate command at the time of Gen. O'Neil's arrest.

The result of the battle was as follows : Killed, John Rowe of Co. A 1st Fenian Cavalry of Burlington, Vt., shot through the throat ; M. O'Brien, Co. C 1st Fenian Cavalry, from Moriah, N. Y. Wounded, Gen. J. S. Donnelly of Utica, N. Y., chief of staff, shot in the thigh ; Lieut. Edward Hope of the Meagher Rifles of Bridgeport, Conn., through the left thigh ; Frank Carrigan of the same company dangerously wounded in the groin ; E. Cronan of Bridgeport, Conn., in the leg ; James Heenan of Fort Edward, N. Y., ankle ; Edward Hallahan of Co. C, 1st Fenian Cavalry, in the arm ; Private Charles Carleton of Cambridge, Vt., flesh wound on the leg ; Daniel Ahern of Winooski, Vt., bad wound in the hip ; and another man, name unknown. The companies of Capts. Fitzpatrick and Conory of Bridgeport, Conn., suffered the greatest loss.

A Fenian council of war was held on the night of the 25th, and afterwards it was alleged that the demoralized effect of the arrest of Gen. O'Neil and the rigid enforcement of the president's proclamation both conspired to dishearten the leaders and the leaders and the council decided to abandon the campaign. This proved to be a mere ruse to divert attention.

The manner of Gen. O'Neil's arrest was immediately telegraphed to President Grant who pronounced it, under the circum-

stances, "one of the most ludicrous things he ever knew," as did many others, but they were unmindful of the fact that the supremacy of the law, after four years of fighting, had been so established even in the hands of a United States marshal, as to make it more potent than a Samson unshorn of his locks among the Philistines.

The Fenian Gen. Spear, in command of a like expedition at St. Albans in the raid of 1866, with Gen. Gleason, arrived in St. Albans at noon of the 26th, and urged the leaders to go to Malone and make an attack in the direction of Trout River. In the evening they held another council of war, at which Gen. Spear was chosen commander-in-chief with some dissenting votes, and they started for Malone. Just before leaving Gen. Gleason received a dispatch from Gen. O'Neil, in jail at Burlington, to the effect that he expected to be released on bail the following day, and expressing a wish that Gen. Spear be placed in command at St. Albans and Gen. Gleason at Malone, and that he (Gleason) had just received a private dispatch from Col. Leary, private secretary of the Fenian Council at New York, to the effect that large numbers of Fenians were being rapidly hurried to Malone.

Thus ended "the battle of Richards' farm," fought in Franklin, in the State of Vermont, where the killed and wounded were shot by the British firing across the lines upon the territory of the United States. The place and circumstances of these trespasses upon our territory will ere long give this battle a prominence in history which but few can realize. The Canadian accounts all presuppose that the battle was fought in Canada which has been accepted as the truth, and no international differences or correspondence have arisen. But the real facts

are that all of the British accounts speak of "the battle of Richards' farm," which lies entirely within the territory of the United States, and the offense so far as the United States are concerned is as great as if they had planted "a seige gun" on the Canadian borders, under the circumstances, and fired upon the approaching Fenians, two miles away in Vermont.

The Canadians buried the body of the young Fenian, Rowe, upon whom was found a belt of one of the Burlington Fire Companies. He was buried under about two feet of soil, dressed, as he was, in his Fenian uniform, and with his pocket handkerchief spread across his face. About his grave the Canadians piled "a cairn," or heap of stones, fearing doubtless that the spirit of this young man might take wings and bring forth ghosts, or his ashes, like those of Napoleon at St. Helena, might bring forth crops of soldiers and again revive the Fenian cause. On Tuesday following Deputy Marshal Smalley crossed the lines and asked Col. Smith for permission to remove Rowe's body, who replied that it would be given up to the friends of the deceased, but that no Fenian should be permitted to cross over for it. A short time thereafter an undertaker from St. Albans exhumed the body, placed the same in a coffin and carried it to St. Albans *en route* for Burlington for interment.

A Canadian Irish poet closed some verses on this battle as follows:

"The bloody day at length was done,  
The Faynians wanted dinner,  
So o'er the line they bravely run  
Beneath their waving banner.

"The mane Canadian crew were sold,  
They darstn't follow after,  
But kept their drooping spirits up  
Wid raising shouts of laughter.

" O'Neil's campaign so bravely fought  
 Was gloriously inded,  
 The I. R. A. their courage proved,  
 Their pathriot cause defended.

" And the Faynian bhoys, wid little noise,  
 Retreated from the front,  
 As brave O'Niel, through prison bars,  
 Saw Burlington, Vermont."

As the Fenians left the battle ground they sold their arms, or cast them away by the roadside, and elsewhere, where they were seized by United States Deputy Marshal N. B. Flanagan, in behalf of the United States government. Their retreat was covered by the firing of a breech loading steel gun, about fifty yards west of " Richards' farm," at about six o'clock P. M., which was taken by some boys after the Fenians had abandoned it and drawn across the lines and sold to the Canadians, and which they claimed to have captured from the Fenians, and over which was displayed the usual British " bluster." During the afternoon and night of the battle and the morning of the 26th, the retreat on St. Albans continued, and that village was again the theater of military display and disappointed hopes. Many of the Fenians were again without food or the means of transportation. The former they must have, but the latter they could forego. Our citizens and authorities again gave them food and shelter, and the necessary means of transportation to their homes. Several of the order were taken prisoners even, as alleged, on Vermont soil, and were lodged in jail at Sweetsburgh, Canada; among them Thomas Murphy of St. Albans, James Hunt and Patrick McNally, who, by the intervention of friends and the aid of the United States government, were released, much dissatisfied with Canadian public boarding houses, kept on " the European plan."

The excitement attending the movement of the battle, and during the following summer and winter, was very great along our Canadian frontier, and throughout the Provinces of Canada, intensified no doubt by frequent anonymous dispatches from the newspaper reporters of St. Albans, who, like the immortal Washington, after he had plied that historical hatchet to the felling of that memorable tree in his father's orchard, "could not tell a lie." Nevertheless, "history" here "sleeps while fiction speaks," and the louder she speaks the more she is applauded. These reporters were possessed of the Fenian secrets and a good deal more, and frequently delighted, in the extreme exuberance of their nature, in writing, by way of retaliation, inflammatory letters for the purpose, as the youth said when he tipped over the bee-hive, of "stirring up the inmates."

Generals Meade and McDowell and their staff officers were in St. Albans on the 28th of May, and left for Malone on the same day, looking after violations of the neutrality laws. About this time the battle of Trout River was fought, resulting in a repulse of the Fenians. These two battles were said to have been mere feints to draw the Canadian forces in those directions, and permit the main force of the Fenian army, said to have been about twenty thousand strong, as indicated by the number of guns distributed in the vicinity, to rendezvous at Ogdensburgh by steamer, rail and otherwise, then cross the St. Lawrence river and proceed thence by the Ottawa railroad to the capital of Canada, cutting off all communication by rail after them. The main body did not come to time, probably by reason of the Stephens-O'Mahony disaffection, the result showing that "the best made plans of mice and men gang oft alee."

A summary of this whole affair may be best illustrated by the witicism of the Irish hunter. Shooting a bird from a lofty tree it came tumbling down upon the rocks beneath. Running to him the hunter exclaimed, "O, fool that I was to waste me powder, the fall itself would have killed him." So of the Fenian movement—their divisions alone would have killed them.

To appease the wrath of Great Britain, no doubt, Col. John H. Brown, Capt. John J. Monehan, Hugh McGinnis, Capt. Daniel Murphy and Gens. O'Neil and Donnelly were arraigned before United States Commissioners Jasper Rand and Jacob Smalley, and held for trial. Gen. O'Neil and Capt. Brown were tried in the United States court of Vermont for breaches of neutrality laws, and sentenced to the Vermont State prison at Windsor, Vermont, whence, after formally serving out a short term, they were pardoned by President Grant. Many of our countrymen would sooner have seen the tongue cleave to the roof of the mouth of any judge, though in the discharge of his lawful duty, than to have had him pronounce sentence on these brave union soldiers, one of whom was the only man who successfully foiled and captured the terror of the northern army during the war—the guerrilla, General Mosby. Others would sooner have seen Great Britain first punish one of her own offenders—which she never did, though equally culpable—before yielding to her demands for vengeance towards a home-leaving, liberty-loving and liberty-saving people!

Irish weakness has always been England's strength. Irish characteristic disaffection has always been her weakness. Had the two wings of this great organization worked together in the true spirit of conciliation, and moved their entire forces upon Canada, striking hands with their numerous friends and sympa-

thizers in the Provinces, the world might have seen the green flag of Ireland waving in triumph over a free, independent Irish Republic.

Their genial wit and humor; their proverbial eloquence and oratory; their natural heroism and bravery, and their intellectual power and enlightenment, should have disclosed to them their only element of weakness, and given them a higher and more independent nationality. On the other hand, this great movement served only to fill the ranks of the Union army; to expose to the world England's sham neutrality; to create disaffection and alarm on British territory; to engage her attention and resources in suppressing her own internal quarrels, and thereby to prevent her recognition of the so called Southern Confederacy, and above all to contribute towards preserving the government of our fathers—wrested from the grasp of a common adversary and preserved in its integrity by the patriotic blood and heroic lives of brave and devoted Irishmen hand in hand with our own countrymen in a thousand hard fought battles. They too stood with our own countrymen as sentinels on "the watch towers" of our Republic in the midst of war's deadly blasts, and saw "the star of peace" rise in all its effulgence over a free, emancipated people. From the battle of Bull Run to the surrender of Richmond these brave men were taught lessons of freedom, equality and liberty. While they could enjoy these blessings under our benign government, they naturally looked to their fatherland and its oppressed inhabitants with a yearning heart brim full of sympathy and compassion.

They expected that the American heart would at least respond in gratitude to their call for sympathy and non-intervention, and it did to a great extent. On the 27th of March, 1867, Gen.



Banks, in the National House of Representatives, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following, which was adopted :

*Resolved*, That this House extends its sympathy to the people of Ireland and Canada in all their just efforts to maintain the independence of states, to elevate the people, and to extend and perpetuate the principles of liberty."

Mr. Seward also wrote Minister Adams on the 28th of March, 1867, "I assume it to be possible that some where and at some time a seditious party in Ireland may proclaim an organized insurrection, with a show of delegated authority from some portions of the Irish people. Such a proceeding is intensely expected by many citizens of the United States. That expectation excites a profound sympathy among adopted citizens of Irish birth and their descendants. It is equally manifest that the sympathy of the *whole* American people goes with such movements, for the reason that there is a habitual jealousy of British proximity across our northern border, and especially for the reason that this nation indulges a profound sense that it sustained great injury from the sympathy extended in Great Britain to the rebels during our civil war." Here is an open and avowed intimation that if union and harmony had existed among the Fenians, and thereby a proper stand had been made on Canadian soil, and an open and fair battle and victory won on that soil, the United States might have accorded belligerent rights to the so called Irish Republic.

But, on the contrary, their divided ranks—their misconceived ideas of liberating Ireland on Irish soil, with the imperial power of the British army and navy almost surrounding them, as Webster once said, "Whose morning drum beat, commencing

with the sun and keeping company with the revolving hours, surrounds the whole earth with one continuous strain of the martial air of England," and above all the demoralized situation of our own country and the exhausted condition of our resources and people, wisely prevented such a recognition at that time. As it is, the territory of our free country, vast in extent and resources, is thrown open to every emigrant. Our institutions welcome every nationality, and our natural gateways are thrown wide open to receive all who come within them, with all our national and social privileges and immunities.

O, blessed country !

"There's freedom at thy gates, and rest  
For earth's down trodden and oppressed;  
A shelter for the hunted head,  
And for the starved laborer—toil and bread."

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